



## **United States Mission to the OSCE**

### **Response to Address by H.E. Mobarez Rashidi, Minister of Counter Narcotics of Afghanistan**

As delivered by Deputy Chief of Mission Gary Robbins  
to the Permanent Council, Vienna  
March 13, 2014

Minister Rashidi, welcome to the Permanent Council, and thank you for your insightful and very pertinent remarks.

Please allow me to express our sadness at the death of First Vice President Fahim. He was a leader for Afghanistan in times of war and in times of peace and played a crucial role in the establishment of a modern, unified Afghan state. I offer my condolences to the Afghan people and to his family as they cope with this loss.

A secure, stable, prosperous, and democratic Afghanistan is clearly in the interest of all participating States, and we should all be strongly engaged in helping make that a reality. The United States thanks all participating States and Partners for Cooperation that have generously contributed to the OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights' (ODIHR) Election Support Team, and we reiterate our call for further financial support for this important undertaking.

Mr. Minister, as you have clearly explained, the growth, production, and trafficking of illicit drugs remains a major problem in Afghanistan. Afghanistan produces well over 80 percent of the world's illicit opium. Illicit drug trafficking undermines good governance, fuels corruption and insecurity, and puts money in the hands of corrupt officials, criminals, and insurgents.

To face these tough realities, the United States and Afghanistan enjoy a robust partnership in combating the trade of illicit narcotics. Together we are working to build Afghan capacity to implement and lead counter-narcotics efforts. We have seen encouraging progress in the Afghan government's capacity to combat illicit drugs in areas such as prosecutions, interdiction, and alternative livelihoods for local farmers. For example, from March 2012 to March 2013, Afghanistan's Counter Narcotics Justice Center Investigation and Laboratory Department processed cases involving more than 233 metric tons of illegal drugs – a 26 percent increase over the previous year.

There is more to be done, however, and the OSCE can help, particularly in the area of drug trafficking interdiction. The OSCE's border security training programs – particularly at the Border Management Staff College and the Patrolling, Programming, and Leadership Program, both in Dushanbe – are an important component of these efforts because they strengthen the capacity of Afghanistan's border troops to stop the flow of drugs leaving the country as well as the precursor chemicals that are being smuggled into the country. These

programs should continue, and should be expanded. The joint border training program between Turkmenistan and Afghanistan that the OSCE Center in Ashgabat will implement this year is an important step in this direction. We also encourage the Chairmanship and the Secretary General to continue the practice of devoting space specifically to Afghanistan on the agendas of relevant OSCE events.

We again thank you, Minister Rashidi, for your presence here today and your remarks.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.